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Montana State Fund Guardian

MAY 1999

## COMPUTER VIRUS UPDATE

State Fund has suffered from recent bouts of the Melissa virus and it looks like the virus may hang around awhile longer. This virus is serious. It can slow or bring e-mail systems to a halt. The virus uses the Outlook address book to send itself to 50 people from the virus recipient.

Everyone needs to be on the lookout for any e-mail that reads "Important message from <name of trusted source>." This causes people to think it is a real message with an important Word document attachment. Once the Word document is opened, the message is sent to 50 more people. This can continue until the e-mail system is so bogged down, it's rendered helpless.

Most state agencies have upgraded their virus scanning software which will help prevent the State from getting this and other viruses sent via Internet e-mail. As messages are scanned on the Internet Mail Connector, any e-mail found to have a virus is moved to a folder on the Internet mail server and is not delivered. Both the sender and receiver are sent an e-mail message notifying them of the virus detection.

Because of our readiness to deal with this problem, as well as the cooperation of agencies to update the VirusScan software, our e-mail system was not affected as badly as it could have been. Education is also a big key. Users must recognize and not open e-mail with the Melissa virus. Remember, if you see anything in your inbox titled "Important message from. . ." do not open it—even if you know the sender. Delete the message immediately and report it to the MIS help desk (6504).

If you have any questions about computer viruses, contact the MIS help desk or Lynne Pizzini, Network Security Officer at ISD (4510).

## FAREWELL TO ENID CHRISTENSEN

Thanks to Enid Christensen, Document Indexing Clerk, for her hard work and dedication to the State Fund over the last several years. Enid has been with State Fund since June, 1991 and plans to retire on June 4. Her future plans include sailing, spending time with her grandchildren, bird watching, and remodeling her house.

Enid's co-workers express how they've enjoyed working with her. Enid's supervisor, Dwight Bernard says, "I've enjoyed the conversations and stories I've shared with Enid. She is a joy to be around." Toni Sperle thanks Enid for always coming over to the mail room to make sure she takes her breaks on time. Monica Abbott adds, "Enid is the nicest, most pleasant person to work with because she never complains."

Enid's indexing co-workers also recall her pleasant manner. Phyllis McDonald says, "Her calm manner and great sense of humor make her easy to work with. Our cubicle won't be the same without her!" Inez Slayman remembers one of Enid's favorite sayings—"Oh Dear!" Which she usually exclaimed when she had computer problems or a difficult document. Inez hopes she can continue to

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Published monthly by and for the employees of the Montana State Fund.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we all know, employee compensation is an important part of our job. At Montana State Fund, which operates as a competitive workers' compensation insurer, we utilize a "pay-for-performance" program that links employee compensation to our overall business performance.

The State Fund's objective with this important program is to attract, retain, and motivate employees of the caliber necessary to achieve our objectives. But how does the pay-for-performance system really work? The main components are quite simple: we set competitive salaries against the marketplace; we reward performance; we value a high-performance culture; and productive employees have opportunities to succeed and grow.

These components are important for two reasons. First, our philosophy sets the direction for the pay program and the guidelines from which decisions are made. Second, this philosophy helps keep our pay program aligned with our business goals and objectives.

Periodically, the compensation pay ranges will undergo shifts to reflect market changes. Factors, such as market shifts, are taken into consideration as part of the analysis undergone each year when we determine merit budgets.

It is important to recognize our compensation is not solely base pay. Employee benefits, such as the employer paid portions of health insurance, PERS matched contributions, paid parking, training and development programs, employer paid professional memberships, and holiday pay and leave account for a large portion of our total compensation package.

In addition, as I mentioned at the February 1999 Department Representative Meeting, I would like to implement an incentive program for all employees over the next couple years. This will be developed and implemented in phases, and is subject to Board approval. I plan to present the next phase-in (exempt employees) at the June Board Meeting. The last phase-in would include non-exempt employees. Ultimately, all compensation decisions are driven by our business environment. Based on continued State Fund competitive performance and business conditions allowing, I am committed to recommending to the Board full implementation of an incentive program no later than budget year 2002.

An incentive plan helps us focus on our business plan, is reflective of what our market is doing, and recognizes a team approach, ultimately impacting State Fund's success.

Understanding the State Fund's pay philosophy helps us better comprehend how and why pay decisions are made. Also, knowing what's important to this organization helps all of us meet the performance expectations for our individual positions.

## EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Cec Robinson, Senior Premium Audit Technician and the April Employee of the Month.

Cec has tackled the challenge of working on the PAALS project and not only represents Premium Audit but represents Loss Control as well. If it were not for Cec's persistence, Loss Control would likely not have the representation needed. Even with the hectic schedule, Cec has maintained a positive, energetic attitude and continued to perform her regular job duties.

Cec's co-workers explain she has made an enormous effort to communicate issues for both departments and works to resolved them. They add, "She is persistent, organized, helpful, and energetic. She is a joy to work with and State Fund is lucky to have her as an employee.

Thanks, Cec, for your dedication and hard work on the PAALS project and your regular job duties!

## KUDOS KOLUMN

Mark Barry sends kudos to Mary Martinez for her support and dedication in representing the State Fund at the "Montana Partnership's *Finding a Better Way Conference*" sponsored by the AFL-CIO and the Montana Chamber of Commerce. Thanks for volunteering to attend on such short notice.

Policyholder Roger Koopman, owner of Career Concepts, recently wrote a letter praising Laurie Kuntz and Keri Routzahn. He wrote, "From my experience, these two employees do a particularly outstanding job. They are consummate professionals, who not only do a fine job, but conduct themselves in such a way as to make me genuinely feel we are on the same team. Great job Laurie and Keri!

Loss Control Consultants John Gasper and Mel Lockridge recently provided safety training at University of Montana, Montana Tech, and Rocky Mountain Clinic. Both received complimentary letters from these insureds. All three businesses were delighted with the knowledgeable and responsive training sessions.

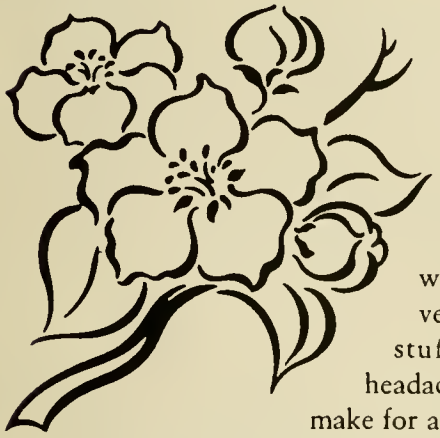
Judy Ober, from the Diocese of Helena, was very complimentary of Kim Erickson and the way she helped set up this claim. Judy said Kim was, "helpful and courteous."

Mark Barry has received many compliments on the outstanding training Lynn Donnelly has provided to state agency personnel on MT PRRIME. Not only is Lynn running the accounting functions, she is involved in our PAALS and AMPS systems and the MT PRRIME project. Her dedication to these projects and all she has done for State Fund is greatly appreciated.

Phyllis McDonald thanks Melodie Phalp of the Imaging Unit for her patience and endurance in helping with the policy indexing on third floor.

## SPRINGTIME IN THE ROCKIES

*By Morgan Hahn*



Discounting the occasional blizzard, it's springtime in Montana. The flowers are blooming, the grass is growing, and the street sweepers are creating plumes of dust....ACHOO!

You get the idea. For those of you with allergies, this time of year can be very trying, to say the least! A runny or stuffed nose, itchy, watering eyes, headache, sneezing, or sore throat, does not make for a great day.

If you do experience these symptoms, try to avoid the allergens that trigger a response. Stay indoors as much as possible during hay fever season. Keep windows shut and use your air conditioner. Try not to rub your eyes. Get regular exercise, which helps keep nasal passages open. If over-the-counter remedies don't work effectively, see a doctor for other medications or desensitization therapy.

For others, it's more than just the occasional sniffles and sneezes. Some have severe reactions to different pollens, dusts, fragrances, and the like. These people end up having to take time off from work, require prescription medication, and even need to take trips to the emergency room!

We can all do our part to help our co-workers who suffer with allergies. Besides our policy of no smoking within the building, other fragrances such as perfumes, colognes, and hairsprays should be used sparingly, or not at all. We'll all breathe a little easier.

## CUSTOMER CONNECTION

*By Karen Wegner*

Try to remember these tips when you transfer a customer or receive a transferred call. A little thoughtfulness will go a long way to improve both internal and external customer service.

### When transferring calls:

- Keep the customer informed.
- Always state what you can do for them not what you can't.
- Avoid using the word transfer. Use words like connect, get you in touch with, or let you talk to.
- Do not let a co-worker take a call without giving them some background information.
- Introduce the customer to the new person whenever possible.
- Make sure the customer knows you plan to transfer them.

### When receiving a transferred call:

- Identify yourself.
- Restate the issue.
- Use the customers' name.
- Don't make them repeat the story.

## TRAINING CALENDAR

Sexual Harassment—June 1; 9-10:30

Getting to Know the Agents, part 2—June 7; 9-10

Contemporary Writing Skills—June 10, 11; 1-4

FMLA for Supervisors—June 15; 1-3

FMLA for Employees—June 15; 3-5

Conducting Performance Appraisal Interviews—June 11; 1-4:30

Getting to Know MIS, part 2—June 29; 9-10

**Watch for the fiscal year 2000 training calendar coming soon!**

## HUMAN RESOURCES

*Personnel changes as of May 30, 1999*

### New Hires

Herb Byers (UW)
Brian Bent (UW)
Patricia Boege (Claim)
Hester Austin (HR & C)

## NEW EMPLOYEES

**Herb Byers** joins Loss Control Services as a Senior Loss Control Consultant. Herb previously held loss control positions at Cigna P&C, Argonaut Insurance, and the Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance.

He holds a BA in Organizational Communication and an Associate in Loss Control Management designation. Herb enjoys spending time outdoors hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and canoeing.

**Amanda Krissovich,** Senior Paralegal, recently joined the Legal Department. She was previously employed as an investigator, paralegal, and office manager for a law firm in California and was a small business owner. Amanda earned a degree in Criminal Justice from California State University Sacramento and a paralegal certificate from Saint Mary's College. She is a NALA member. Amanda enjoys spending time with her family, camping, fishing, boating, and photography.

**Robin Peake** recently joined the Underwriting Department as an Underwriting Technician Assistant. Robin helps her husband run an electrician business, and she has previously worked in the accounting areas of a construction company and a cabinet shop. She has also managed her own service station. Robin is married with three daughters.

**Hester Austin** joins CSU as a Customer Service Representative. Hester has lived in Helena over two years during which she worked at the Federal Reserve Bank. Before moving to Helena, she was a teller supervisor at Norwest Bank in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Hester earned a BA in Business Administration from the University of New Mexico. She is originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee.

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*Continued from page 1.*

say this when she retires to the foxes, birds, and other animals she often [illegible]s in her backyard.

Sheryl Semans spoke of Enid's "puzzling" personality. Enid enjoys putting puzzles together and often talked of going home to relax by working on her current puzzle.

Perhaps Melodie Phalp sums it up best with her comments. "In all the years I've worked with Enid, she has always been upbeat and positive, uplifting others with her sharp wit, twinkling eyes, and quirky giggle. Her deep faith and concern for others gives her a motherly attitude that touches everyone's heart. We will always remember Enid's lasagna at Christmas. (Especially Jeff!) God Bless and happy sailing, Enid. We will miss you!"

A reception will be held for Enid on her last day, June 4. Cake and punch will be served outside Dwight's office in the morning. Everyone is invited to stop by and wish her well.

## "QUALITY CARE MONTANA" KICKS OFF JULY 1

Montana State Fund's new partnership program with managed care organizations (MCOs) will officially kick off July 1. We are planning to call the new program "Quality Care Montana," and it will focus on providing high quality medical care for injured workers at the best possible value. We are currently exploring ways to register this new name for the State Fund.

A major difference between Quality Care Montana and our old MCO partnership program is the number of MCOs involved. The old plan utilized eight MCOs while Quality Care Montana will include the services of three MCOs.

The result will be more consistent delivery of services to injured workers and increased quality of services provided. Because there are fewer MCOs involved, the additional business will allow them to incorporate better management services and best practice protocols, all resulting in increased service. The new program will also increase the ease of program administration for the State Fund, which should result in added efficiencies.

Quality Care Montana is just another instance of our efforts to enhance services and value to our customers and their employees. Watch for more information about Quality Care Montana in the days and weeks ahead.

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Jay Phillips

Please call 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

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